

Department Updates



Barron County

March 2016

Circuit Court

Judge James Babler Circuit Court Judge, Br 1

The Barron County Circuit Court Judges have initiated a new Juvenile Court program called "Road to Reunification." The program was developed in collaboration with the Barron County Department of Health & Human Services. Judge J.M. Bitney, along with Stacy Frolik, Director of the Department, and Karla Broten, Program Manager for Youth and Family, worked together many months developing the program. It focuses on

children in need of protection and service cases (CHIPS) where one or both parents are addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. The Road to Reunification Program (RTR) is modeled after Drug Court, which is proven to be more effective in changing behaviors than the standard Court model.

RTR cases will come before a Judge every six weeks for review. Studies show that frequent intervention with the Judge provides more success in court cases. The program

brings together the parents, the prosecutor's office, defense attorneys and Guardian ad Litem, to frequently monitor the progress parents are making in the reunification process with their children.

Judge Bitney got the idea after seeing a similar program in Milwaukee County which focuses on parents addicted to methamphetamine. Due to the high incidence of methamphetamine addiction by parents in Barron County, the Judges felt it was appropriate to initiate such a

program here to improve the outcomes in our CHIPS cases.

In recognition of the amount of time and intensity of services, it was decided to start with six families. The selection was made by the Judges, in concert with the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Judges are extremely pleased to have the support and collaboration of the Department of Health and Human Services in embarking on this new program.

Finance

Jodi Busch, Finance Director

Spring time is audit time in the Finance Department. In addition to daily duties, staff has been very busy reconciling accounts and closing out 2015. The Highway audit fieldwork by our external auditors, CliftonLarsonAllen, will be conducted the week of March 28th. The county-wide audit will commence on April 25th.

The county-wide audit consists

of CLA being onsite for approximately 4 weeks conducting fieldwork, which includes reviewing audit workpapers and reconciliations, testing internal controls, and reviewing grant activity. Based on this information, Financial Statements will be developed, compiled and submitted to various agencies with a deadline of July 31st. We strive to continually receive an unmodified audit opinion which is the highest rating that can be received by Generally Accepted

Accounting Principle (GAAP) standards. This rating helps our bond rating as well as grant eligibility.

The start of 2016 was extra busy this year with official notification that we had been selected by the IRS for a payroll examination for 2014. Numerous requests for documents were requested in the areas of payroll and accounts payable, and sent to the IRS office in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Special thanks to

Charla Kucko and Barb Elliott for handling the bulk of the information requests. Per the final documents recently received, I am very happy to report that no issues arose from the examination and we received a clean bill of health in regards to our reporting procedures and practices! I chalk this up to the excellent Finance staff we have here at Barron County; their level of expertise and team mentality is truly top notch!

Register of Deeds

Recently, some very important bills were signed into law regarding our department!

Vital records: Statewide Issuance Act 157 was signed into law on February 29, 2016. This bill will allow people to apply for their vital record in any county in the State of Wisconsin. Currently, if you were born in Milwaukee County, but reside in Barron

County, you would have to contact Milwaukee County for your birth certificate. As of January 1, 2017 – Barron County will have access to the record.

Act 142 was also signed into law on Feb 6, 2016 – this bill will allow someone to purchase an uncertified, pre-1907 vital record, scan it in and display it on various websites such as Ancestry.com.

Electronic Transfer Returns: Act 145 was signed into law on Feb 4, 2016. This bill requires an electronic transfer return to be submitted on almost all conveyances. This bill will benefit the mandated statewide parcel mapping initiative, will allow the public to view all property transfers, will assist the municipal assessors in preparing the appro-

priate assessments on all properties and will eliminate the confusion on whether or not you need to submit an electronic transfer return when conveying property.

Our software conversion is finished and we are all very happy with the features that the system allows.

Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center

Jennifer Jako, RDN, CD

Nutrition Program Manager

It's another great day to be working in Barron County.....

We are excited to announce the Aging and Disability Resource Center (Meals on Wheels Program), in collaboration with the Employee Wellness Committee, will be offering a fresh soup and salad bar to Barron County employees starting Tuesday March 29, 2016!

The soup and salad bar will be offered weekly on Tuesdays in room 2151 from 11:30am-1pm. An extensive variety will be offered to create your own salad or wrap and will also include delicious soup and locally made fresh bread. Toppings will change with the seasons and by request! Variety will not disappoint: creative, healthy and fresh! Cost will be \$7.00 per person, and what makes this salad bar even better is **revenue generated will go directly to improve funding for the Meals on Wheels program**. How did we arrive at the day and cost? We are not doing this to be in competition with other community salad bars, we will offer this just once per week on a day the does not compete with others; the cost is comparable to other options in the community. We are buying fresh bread and produce locally as able to support our community. Again, you can't beat the opportunity to eat delicious, healthy food at your workplace while giving to an important community program like the Meals on Wheels program.

Some fun facts about the Meals on Wheels program:

- More than 300 meal delivery drivers volunteer with our Meals on Wheels program.
- Drivers delivered about 50,000 Meals on Wheels in Barron County in 2015.
- Did you know? One year of Meals on Wheels costs about \$1,875 compared to one day in a hospital costs about \$1900.
- Did you know? One day of Meals on Wheels costs about \$8 compared to one day in a nursing home costs about \$170.
- The Chetek-Weyerhaeuser school district encourages and promotes volunteerism by allowing the National Honor Society students to deliver Meals on Wheels during their lunch hour.
- Our staff and volunteers have received unusual requests over the years: can you flip my mattress? Can you feed my horses? Can you measure for my curtains?

So why offer a salad bar? According to the CDC, an estimated 70% of Barron County adults over the age of 18 are consuming less than 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. A survey was completed 9/21/15 by 116 Barron County employees and 95% of those surveyed said they would participate in an on-site healthy salad bar if available. Furthermore, 70% reported they would participate

weekly if given the option. A trip to this salad bar will help increase your fresh produce intake thus improving health.

Still need a few more reasons why to choose the employee salad bar? We are actively working with the Barron Community Garden taskforce with hopes to purchase fresh, local produce for the salad bar from the community garden. We will provide samples of and information about foods you may not be as familiar with, i.e. quinoa, arugula, chick peas, bok choy, herbs, etc. The Wellness Committee will offer incentives with the salad bar. And we will be providing environmentally friendly food containers. Well stocked salad bars offer a quick and convenient opportunity to tap into the extraordinary nutritional benefits healthy foods can provide. What happens when healthy eating spills into employee off-time? Families start to eat healthier. They cook healthier for their friends, who cook healthier for other friends—and the nutrition of the community improves. Healthy employees don't just lead to healthy organizations; they also lead to healthy communities. So we have decided to raise the (salad) bar and embark on the most fabulous employee salad bar ever. Be sure to check us out and get the most nutritional bang for your buck. Hope to see you there. If you have any other questions about our Meals on Wheels program, please contact our office at (715) 537-6225.

Sheriff's Department

Chris Fitzgerald, Sheriff

Our 2015 annual report was sent out and if you have not seen it yet you can go to our website barronsheriff.org and it is the reports heading. You can also view previous years and get any other information about the sheriff's dept from this site.

I did attached our 2016 goals but as always the number 1 goal is for everyone to go home safe to their families every night.

2016 Goals:

- Implement the new squad and body camera program
- Continuation of efforts to reduce drugs and alcohol crimes in the county

- Expand our community involvement in different communities through participating in community events
- Expand our efforts in looking for and applying for additional grants
- Implement the new camera system in the Justice Center

We have had 1 traffic fatality already this year and remind everyone to buckle up, don't drink and drive and never text and drive so you can make it home safe to your family.

Also in January we launched our new squad and body cameras so now all of our patrol and jailers have a body camera on them. Special thanks goes out to our IT Dept Mark, Aaron, and Lance for helping get this program launched for us.

We have also hired Mike Judy to fill our Emergency Services Director Position vacated by Todd Volk, who left to take a private sector job in MN. Mike looks to start with us on March 30th and comes to us from West Virginia with lots of experience in dispatch and Emergency Management.

Also 2 new dispatchers started Heather Mathison and Emily Stephens.



Human Resources

Rachael Richie, HR Director

<u>New/Replacement Positions</u>				
<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Office/Department</u>	<u>Incumbent</u>	<u>Date Filled</u>	<u>New/Replacement</u>
Public Health Nurse	Health & Human Services	Brianna Olson	1-11-16	Replacement
Assistant Clerk of Court	Clerk of Court	Danielle Neva (Internal Transfer from DA / Sheriff)	1-11-16	Replacement
Economic Support Specialist	Health & Human Services	Heather Salquist	1-18-16	Replacement
Office Specialist	District Attorney	Bobbie Ellis	2-22-16	Replacement
Civilian Communication Officer	Sheriff	Heather Mathison Emily Stephens	2-27-16 2-28-16	Replacement
Judicial Assistant	Courts	Bobbie Reinke	3-21-16	Replacement
CSP Case Manager	Health & Human Services	Drew Schultz	3-21-16	Replacement
Emergency Services Director	Sheriff	Michael Judy	3-30-16	Replacement
Social Worker	Health & Human Services	Holly Hulback (Internal Transfer from Sheriff)	4-4-16	Replacement
Civilian Correction Officer	Sheriff	Recruiting		Replacement
Behavioral Health Services Program Manager	Health & Human Services	Recruiting		Replacement
Public Health Specialist	Health & Human Services	Recruiting		Replacement

Maintenance / Parks & Recreation

Steve Olson

Maintenance Superintendent

Maintenance

- Retrofitting Justice Center to LED lighting
- Updating of lighting control system at Justice Center
- Upgrading air handling units in the DNR wing of the Government Center (this was not included in the HVAC update)
- Will be working to improve outdoor signage at the Government Center

Parks & Recreation

- 3 additional docks will be located at various lakes
- Bathroom upgrade needed at Angler's Park in Chetek. Building looks good but holding tank needs replacement.
- Road repair will be done at Goose Lake Road / Swamp Road near Mikana
- Repairs to Lower Turtle landing
- Blacktopping of Upper Turtle parking area
- Walking trail markings and repair

- Will be installing a boat washing station at Waldo Carlson Park. This will provide an area to wash boats prior to launching boats into Red Cedar Lake.

Land Services

Director of Land Services – Dave Gifford

This past year the Farmland Preservation Plan update was approved by the County Board. With the completion of the FPP the Land Use Ordinance must be amended for compliance with the plan and new state rules. The revised ordinance must be approved by DATCP by the end of the year which will allow the certification of zoned towns for the FPP tax credit. Additional amendments must be made to the ordinance related to Shoreland Overlay District by October 2016.

Real Property Lister – Pat Haas

If your legal description reads, *part of the SW -NW described in volume 369, page 27*, you aren't going to be able to find it on a map... correct? The practice of describing a parcel by the volume and page was easier years ago but now creates confusion and more work! The Real Property Lister is presently in the process (and will be for a long time) of looking up those old deeds and writing them out as part of the current legal description; the goal being the ability to read the legal and find the parcel. By the way, volume 369, page 27 involves property in the Town of Almena; the deed was recorded March 22, 1971.

Sanitary Technician – Mark Stanley

In 2015, there were 234 sanitary permits received, reviewed and issued, 193 soil tests reviewed and issued and 224 septic systems installed and inspected. The State audit was completed with no concerns or issues. Two Wisconsin Fund applications reviewed, submitted and approved for a total of \$12,500; this program provides cost sharing to assist eligible landowners to replace condemned septic systems. It should be noted that this program is due to expire in fiscal year 2017.

Administrative Secretary – Kim Collins

In 2015, there were 75 public hearings noticed: 46 Rezoning, 28 Special Exceptions/Variations and 1 nonmetallic mining hearing. Coordinated the recently completed Environmental Poster Contest, involving 11 schools with 349 participants. Congratulations to Jessica Fjelstad of Chetek Middle School – her poster went on to place Third in the State Contest earlier this month. Fourteen area youth participated in the Environmental Speaking Contest and Senior Division winner Chloe Steiner also participated in the State Contest and was awarded Third Place. Con-

gratulations to all speaking contest participants!

Conservation Planner – Justin Everson

Conservation and nutrient management planning is continuing on a daily basis as usual. We are currently taking registration for a nutrient management training day for farmers, which we are hosting here on the 29th of this month.

County Surveyor – Mark Netterlund

Spoke at the Parcel Mapping Surveying Forum put on by the Wisconsin State Cartographer's Office held at UW Eau Claire on March 15th on the importance of having an up to date Public Land Survey System to use as a base for accurate county mapping. Monument corner restoration is an important aspect in accurate mapping. In 2015, an additional 38 corners were restored; 23 of the 28 Towns have been completed.

Nonmetallic Mining – Bronson Thalacker

There are 68 gravel pits and 17 industrial sand mines in Barron County, which require the review and processing of annual reports and permits along with re-assessing financial assurance requirements. In 2015, one new reclamation plan and 4 amendments to reclamation plans were reviewed. Barron County reclamation standards for evaluating progressive reclamation and determining final reclamation success were implemented.

Compliance Technician – Marshall Black

In 2015, 14 land use violations were brought into compliance and 344 land use permits were issued including 59 for new dwellings, which is an increase from 2014. In July of 2015, significant changes were made to the Wisconsin Shoreland Protection Program standards which impacted county Shoreland Zoning Ordinances throughout the State. Revisions are being made to the shoreland related sections within the Barron County Land Use Ordinance to reflect these changes in State Code.

County Conservationist - Tyler Gruetzmacher

Three large Barnyard Runoff Systems were constructed in 2015 using grant programs from the State. One of them was at the headwaters of Tuscobia Creek. It has dramatically reduced the nutrient and sediment load to the creek, which has native Brook Trout, and

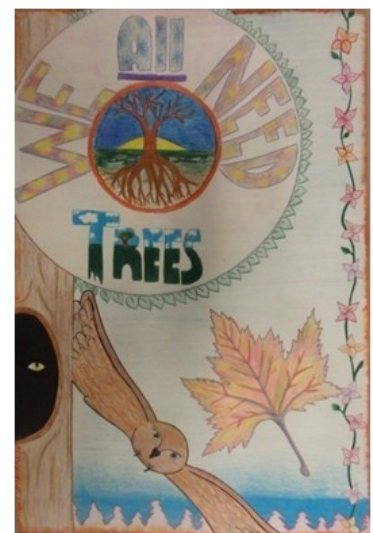
further into the Tuscobia Lake/Rice Lake system. Both barnyards will also positively impact the herd health management on the family farms in which they are located.

Priorities for further projects continue to be ones to address State Runoff Prohibitions, such as uncontrolled runoff from feeding areas and shoreline erosion caused by cattle.

The Red Cedar Basin Implementation Plan has been approved by the US EPA. This was a joint effort with Dunn County, UWEX, and WDNR among many other groups to outline the pollutant sources in the basin and how they will be addressed over the next decade. It will add preference points for any Federal funding for projects in the basin.

GIS Specialist – Rhonda Sukys

Land divisions from 2015 have been incorporated into the county's parcel mapping. Ken Filter and I continue to update mapping based on the more accurate section corner locations collected by the County Surveyor. I am currently working with our assessment/tax software and GIS website vendors to facilitate a direct link between these public websites. This will provide a more seamless and up-to-date product for the many users of this data. Additional mapping projects for the Farmland Preservation Plan and ordinance changes are also taking place, and I am assisting the Zoning Administrator to develop possible options for these projects.



*Drawing by Jessica Fjelstad,
Chetek Middle School*

Treasurer

Vonnie Ritchie, Treasurer

The spreadsheet below shows a comparison of taxes for the past three years. The unpaid taxes as of February are collected by our office for all municipalities except for the City of Rice Lake. On September 1st the current year unpaid taxes (County Tax) are combined with old the year tax file (Redemptions). All taxing districts are paid the balance of their levies for the current year's taxes on August 20th and unpaid taxes are retained by the county.

Three Year Tax Roll Comparison

Tax Year/Year Due	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
State Tax	607,502.75	633,245.94	653,570.47
County Tax	18,152,504.27	19,174,143.00	19,569,260.00
Muni Tax	17,627,963.44	18,035,528.55	19,177,352.29
Special Dist	371,292.89	378,304.47	372,523.03
Schools	36,266,548.10	39,799,787.19	39,673,623.86
WITC	4,404,464.47	1,325,538.13	1,411,339.24
Total Levied Taxes	77,430,275.92	79,346,547.28	80,857,668.89
Omitted/70.43 Corr	7,831.19	6,418.16	-55,657.07
Sp Ass/Charges/DU	694,543.78	895,424.18	652,154.78
MFL	143,316.19	153,203.25	160,684.03
Total Tax Roll	78,275,967.08	80,401,592.87	81,614,850.63
Lottery Credits	1,507,263.87	1,611,262.64	1,496,068.39
First Dollar Credits	1,508,174.77	1,622,794.52	1,568,524.05
State Credits	5,769,020.38	5,725,788.99	6,735,285.80
Taxes paid to Muni's	48,409,950.80	50,192,565.50	49,274,098.72
Balance Due Feb	21,081,557.26	21,249,181.22	22,540,873.67

Listed below is interest and penalty collected on delinquent taxes. As you can see, the amount we collect on interest and penalty is decreasing. I believe that with the low bank interest rates, taxpayers are paying their taxes earlier.

Interest and Penalty Collected on Delinquent Taxes

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
County Tax	72,366.31	63,386.99	53,094.70	68,146.92	61,603.94
Redemptions	466,588.95	466,817.49	433,644.72	328,184.32	303,600.44
Total	538,955.26	530,204.48	486,739.42	396,331.24	365,204.38

Treasurer (Continued)

Below is the list of delinquent tax balances on December 31st for the past four years, the delinquent tax total is decreasing.

DELINQUENT CERTIFICATES

Year End Balances				
TAX YEARS:	DEC 31, 2012	DEC 31, 2013	DEC 31, 2014	DEC 31, 2015
2000	32.90			
2001	36.28	36.28		
2002	255.59	255.59	255.59	
2003	298.07	298.07	298.07	298.07
2004	322.59	322.59	322.59	322.59
2005	326.90	326.90	326.90	326.90
2006	304.20	304.20	304.20	304.20
2007	5,543.69	5,543.69	5,543.69	338.76
2008	15,763.08	9,525.98	9,212.32	4,166.14
2009	169,384.31	10,215.19	8,330.78	3,382.36
2010	567,832.46	132,560.41	13,403.88	5,439.40
2011	1,010,097.66	401,324.99	142,597.84	5,726.13
2012		765,121.02	355,910.04	132,409.13
2013			745,317.96	356,169.72
2014				645,349.66
YR END BALANCE	1,770,197.73	1,325,834.91	1,281,823.86	1,154,233.06

Our office sends out notices to delinquent property owners four times a year. We collect taxes every work day during the year. There are several payment options and we will set-up partial payment plans if taxpayers want to do so. Please feel free to contact my office you have questions.